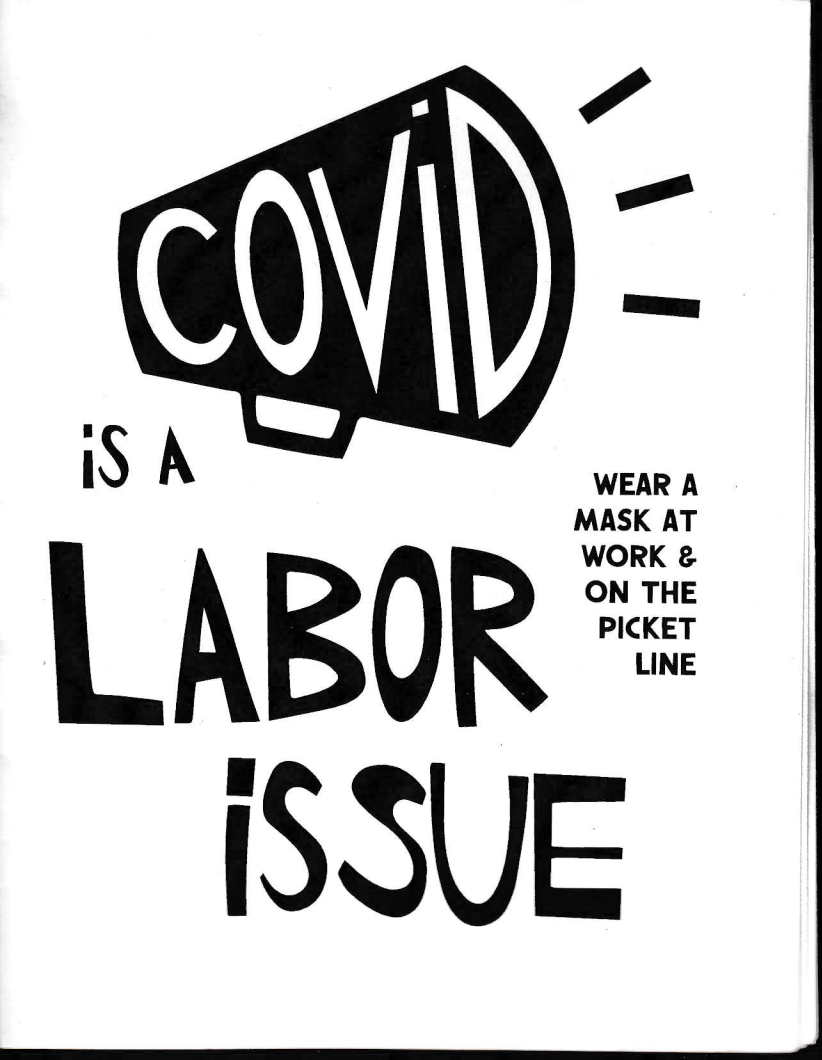
COVID
IS A
LABOR
ISSUE
WEAR A MASK AT WORK & ON THE PICKET LINE

ENDING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY HAS LEFT US MORE VULNERABLE THAN BEFORE

On May 11, 2023, President Biden declared an end to the **Public Health Emergency**. But the pandemic rages on. Returning to normal is about profits, not people — it means our government no longer has to pay for public health measures proven to keep us safe; it means millions living with Long Covid, disappeared from public space while research lags, empathy wanes, and mitigations are dropped.

Between 8-24 million people have lost Medicaid coverage with the end of the Public Health Emergency.

DIDN'T THE CDC TELL US COVID WAS MILD?

It's not. Covid is an **airborne** virus that attacks every organ system in the body, whether or not you experience symptoms, and no matter how mild initial symptoms are. The virus actually gets more lethal as it evolves, spreading unmitigated across our communities. Every time you're infected, your risk of permanent damage, or Long Covid, increases. This damage might not be visible at first. But Covid causes **brain damage, blood clots, strokes, heart attacks, and cancer.** It's not like the flu — scientists now understand its impact on the immune system is much more similar to HIV. And kids are just as vulnerable.

The CDC has caved many times to corporate interests, notably changing its recommended isolation time from 10 to 5 days at the request of Delta Airlines' CEO in 2021.

I'M NOT HIGH RISK. WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Disabled people are not disposable! Our government has brushed over Covid's serious health implications by telling us only those who are "high risk" should take precautions. (And if you've been previously infected, you're now part of this category.) One in 5 cases will develop into Long Covid. Everyone should be able to safely participate in public life. Mitigating Covid is our collective responsibility.

WORKERS BEAR THE BRUNT OF INFECTIONS

From the beginning, our usefulness as workers has been prioritized over our lives. It was "essential" workers who were not allowed to stay home and stay safe when we needed workers to run our grocery stores, hospitals, post offices, and fields. It's workers who are still showing up to work, only to get **infected again and again**, worrying about childcare and rent and bills to be paid. It is our bosses who **fail to protect us!**

A 2023 study of nearly 300 farmworkers in California found 68% had Long Covid.

INTERNATIONAL WORKER SOLIDARITY

The pandemic knows no borders — our fight against Covid is global! Any time our labor rights advance in the US, our exploitation often gets transferred elsewhere. **Colonialism is disabling** — an anti-colonial worker's movement includes preventing the global spread of a deadly and disabling virus!

MASKS OFFER THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF PROTECTION, RESISTANCE, & SOLIDARITY

When workers come together against our common enemy, we win! As the government continues to downplay the dangers and prevalence of Covid in our communities, masks are our most effective tool to protect against the spread of Covid. When we mask, we **say no to forced infection and abandonment!** And masking works best both ways. When we mask, we protect our low-wage and gig workers who clock in and out without sick pay or job protection. We mask to protect working parents, disabled workers, sex workers, immigrant workers, elders, Black and Brown, queer and trans, undocumented, contract, and not-yet-unionized workers!

One in three transmissions are asymptomatic, so you don't always know if you have Covid and therefore can't always know if you (or the people around you) are spreading it. Masks protect everyone.

MASKS PROTECT WORKERS AGAINST AN AIRBORNE VIRUS

Covid travels through the air we breathe via larger droplets and smaller, invisible aerosols, which contain very tiny particles of the virus that can travel long distances on air currents. To protect against aerosol transmission, we need high-filtration masks, such as KN95, N95, or KF94 respirators. **Surgical and cloth masks, while cheaper, don't offer aerosol filtration, which makes them far less effective.** Also, yes, please do keep on washing your hands, but know that airborne transmission accounts for far more cases than transmission via touch.

WORKERS DESERVE HIGH-FILTRATION MASKS THAT FIT

Every mask fits differently. Make sure yours fits snug against your face to ensure that the air you're breathing is being **filtered** through your mask. (It's important to make sure there are no gaps for aerosols to sneak through!) If you're not getting a good seal, you may need to **try a different brand or smaller size.** Any mask is better than none, but in order to protect workers and our communities, we must assert that, while our masks might be disposable, workers aren't! Bosses must provide high-quality PPE masks for all workers!

FINDING YOUR MASKS

Find **high-filtration masks online** *via Bonafide Masks or Project N95.* Amazon is one of the biggest labor rights violators in the world, so workers beware, but we don't blame you if it's your cheapest option. Hardware stores are also a good **in-person** mask source! To get free masks, find your local **Mask Bloc** mutual aid group.

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